

2024: THE YEAR THE WESTERN ELITE LOST CONTROL

AUBURN COLLEGE WEST



#172 • VOL. 32 NO. 2

DARKNESS OF
THE WESTERN SOUL

WEST-SCHMEST

BYE-BYE BIBI

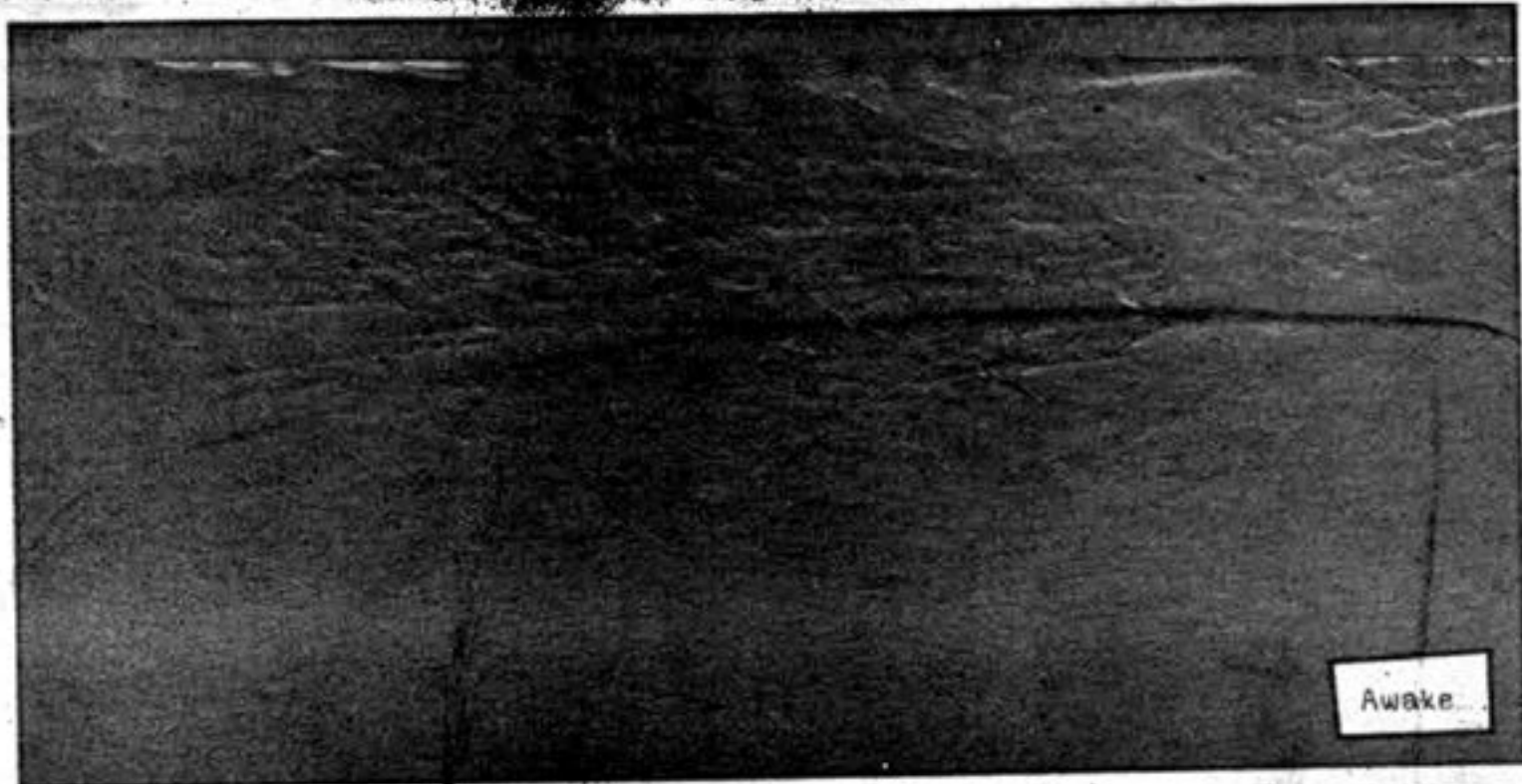
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WHITE CAN

HAPPEN

ANYTIME

NOW

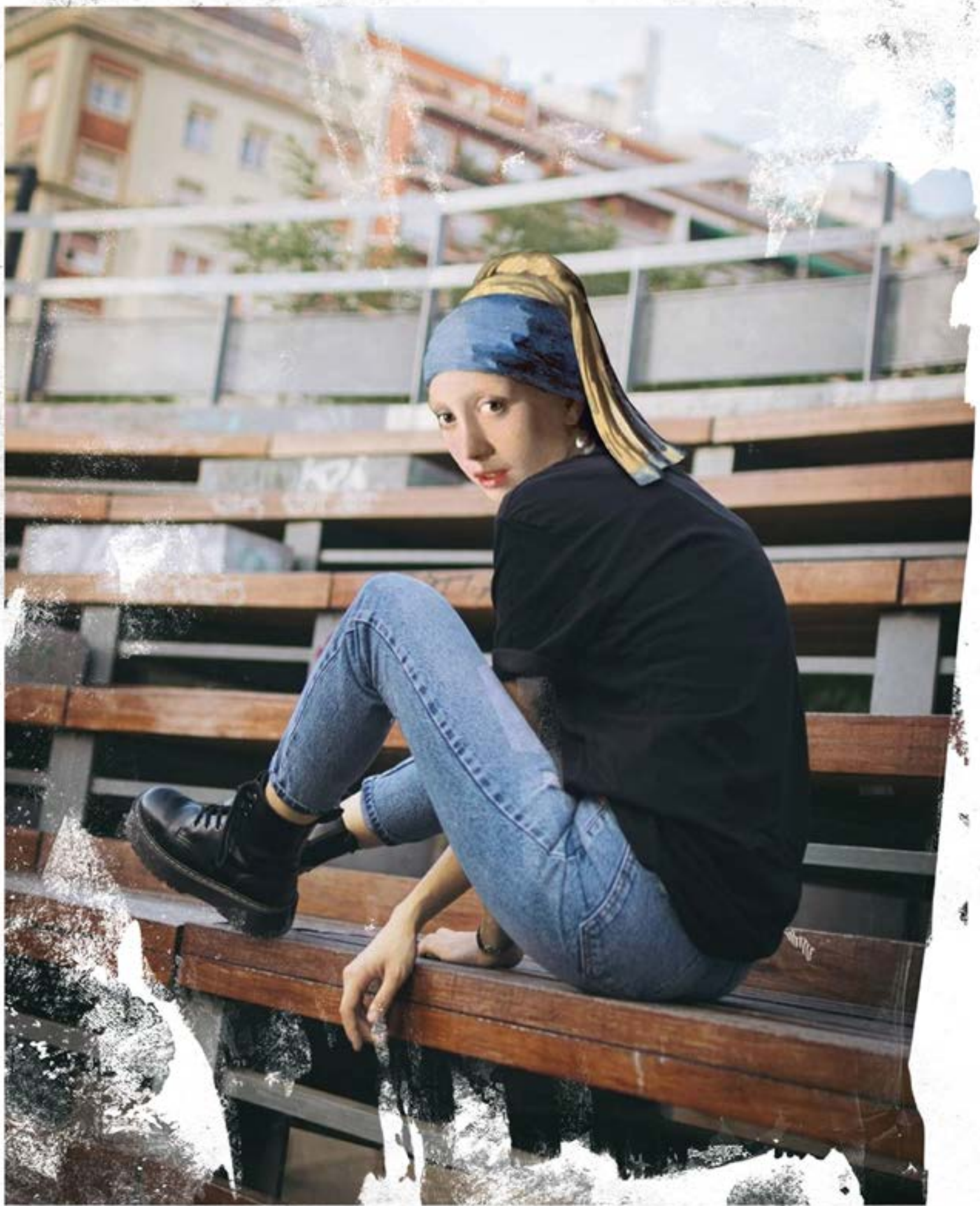


THE MOMENT
YOUR
ATTENTION
DRIFTS



ZED NELSON

Love Me reflects on the cultural and commercial forces that drive a global obsession with



ANONYMOUS

EDS

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IT CAN AMBUSH YOU



DASH

YOUR

HOPES

All the curves have crested and
turned – the only thing rising is the sea.
The earth is on a mission that does not involve us.





JOHN MCWILLIAMS

PRICK YOUR CONSCIENCE

What's happening now in the Jewish community is the *Calling of the Question*: Who are we on a moral and communal level? And how far are we willing to go to defend Israel and the Jewish state? And I think for a lot of people who have not yet been called off the sidelines on this question, they are being called off now. Because there's no way to be neutral on this question. You either are standing against the mass slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza or you are for it.

There's really not anything in between.

— Rabbi Alissa Wise, founder, *Rabbis For Ceasefire*



WEB

WEB WIZARD Marco van der Meer
SOCIAL SKALD William Davies
DATA DADDY Joey Malbon

CHIEF AWAY AT YOUR SACRED BELIEFS

We have seen the very notion of truth eroded and tens of millions of our fellow countrypeople come to live in a world of alternative facts, conspiracy theories, fearmongering, and race-baiting — a world in which cruelty is normalized.

— Robert B. Silvers





SHATTER YOUR
FAITH
IN HUMANITY



STUCK YOUR
SOUL
IN THE
MIDDLE
OF THE NIGHT





**It's become so spiritually dry
in this shithole — the boredom
has overtaken us entirely.**

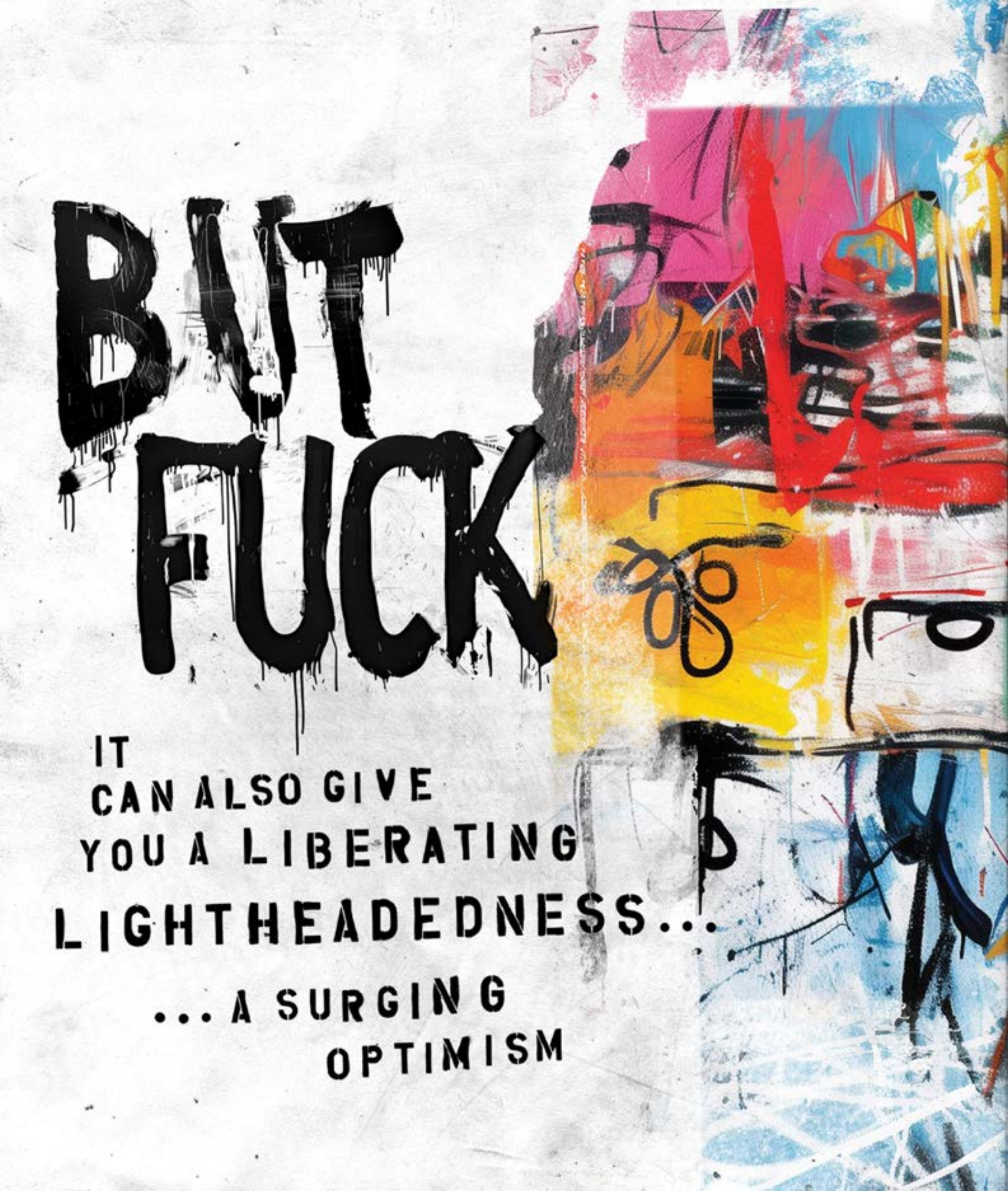
— Dee

MAKE
YOU WONDER

IF THE TIME

HAS COME TO CALL

IT OUTS

The background is a complex, layered abstract composition. It features a mix of colors including bright pink, red, orange, yellow, and blue, which are applied in a splattered, expressive manner. Overlaid on these colors are various black markings, including thick, dripping brushstrokes and thin, sharp lines that resemble graffiti or spray paint. The overall effect is one of raw energy and urban art.

BUT FUCK

IT
CAN ALSO GIVE
YOU A LIBERATING
LIGHTHEADEDNESS...
... A SURGING
OPTIMISM

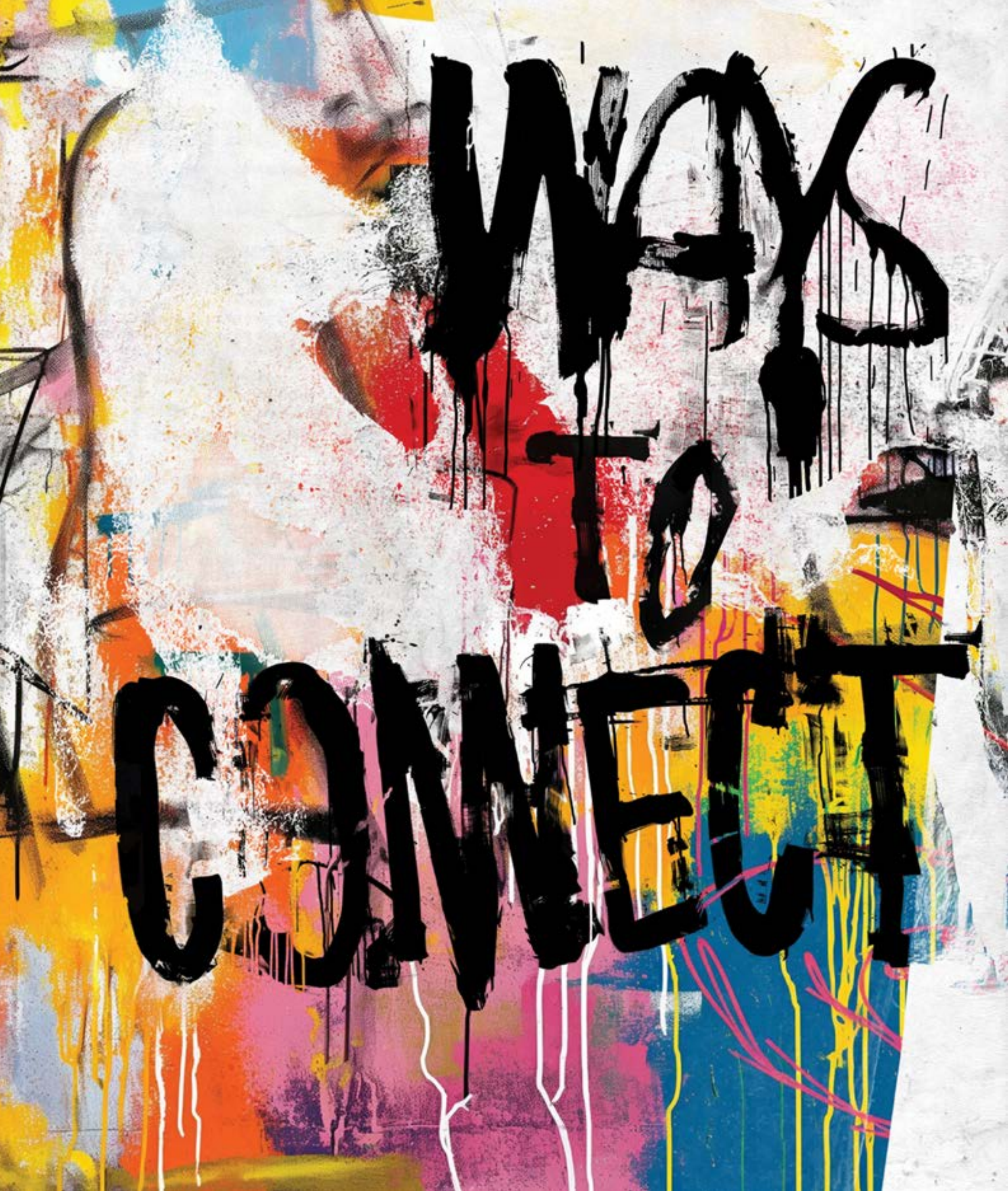




Gaiapolitik!
oh yeah, I'm here for that.
I'll morph into a wild man,
live within the organic snarl
alongside bugs and spiders
even cockroaches

keep my hair oily
wash only on full moons
my kitchen a total
fucking mess
but super organized
and full of good food
I'll buy less, compost more
give up my fridge and freezer
clothes drier too
ya, ya, this is my dirty, healthy
down-to-Earth
fuck-it-all new way of living.

— KL



WAS
FOR
CONFECTION



ERIN CURRIER // ERINCURRIERFINEART.COM

I am four.

A man who is supposed to take care of me touches me in a way that I know is wrong, even when I don't have the vocabulary to explain it.

When my mother, white with rage, complains to my family, she is told off.

In Kerala there is a saying: whether the leaf encroaches on the thorn or the thorn encroaches on the leaf, it's the leaf that tears. In other words, it is not their job to protect the girl; it is the mothers' responsibility to protect her daughter.

I am eleven.

I hear what's said about me: Too bossy. Talks too much. Doesn't have enough girlfriends. Doesn't help out in the kitchen.

At a family vacation, a man six times my age puts his disgusting mouth on mine without my consent. My aunts and uncles are in the room just next door.

Many years later, recounting this story to my mother, I realize the violence I experienced was a mere slight compared to what she and her mother and her grandmother were subjected to.

Injustice is passed on generation to generation. If you're lucky, the violence gets diluted a little.

I am eighteen.

Now I understand the game and how it is to be won.

Step 1: Run.

To safer, freer spaces. Away from the town where everyone knows me. Away from filthy men who don't know how to love a free woman.

I meet women like me, we move in groups. The sisterhood lights up the second I light my first cigarette – with five girls, in the back of a student bar. I talk about what happened to me out loud. The girls nod. It happened to them, too.

I break the generational cycle of silence.

I am one.

It's 1991. India is liberalized. For the first time since Independence, we open up to free international trade. Business is booming. The windfall profits trickle down to the educated middle class. Multi-billionaires mushroom. And my little family blooms because my father decided to take a risk and start a construction business in a country that needed only to build, build, build, build.

Money, in less than a generation, transforms how healthy, safe and educated we are. It protects us from violence, from injustice. It insulates us from unpredictable shocks like natural disasters, sweeping government policy changes and big medical emergencies. So, I imprinted another saying under my skin: Money is freedom. I will stand on my own two feet and never fall into the chasm of poverty my parents worked so hard to protect me from. Writer or Journalist? Journalist or Economist? Economist or Salesperson? Salesperson or Marketer? Every decision ends with the thing that makes the most. Accumulate, multiply, climb up up, up and away.

I am twenty-nine.

Every one of those decisions was worth it. The air tastes like freedom. I choose what I wear, who I'm with, what I drink and when I get home. I see the world. I get to leave my country and exchange it for streets that are pristine and safe. No one touches me without my permission. Whatever life throws at me, my credit card can absorb. It feels like cutting through fabric into another dimension.

I have forgotten to look at price tags. When I go back home, my suitcase is packed only with gifts. In this very tiny, very wealthy country, if I keep my mouth shut, I pay barely any taxes, have spotless streets, trains always on time, all the food I've never tasted. On paper, it is everything a little girl from a little south Indian town should have wanted. But I have just replaced the strings of my community with those of a new master — the capitalist.

These buildings get erected, these streets get washed clean, this machine is kept running in the dark by hands that look exactly like mine. I am running as far as I can from the oppressed, to fight for a seat at the table of the oppressor. At work, I am doing anything, really anything at all, to keep the engine of endless growth running. My job title represents everything I know to be wrong with the world. I spend 80-hour weeks selling a pipe dream. No time for anything else, or anyone. Every promotion is just the price tag for going along with a nonsensical startup Ponzi scheme. I curl like a millipede into the crippling depression I'm too proud to treat.

I chose this. I was not the victim.

I look all the way up the ladder, right to the top. And I ask myself if I want to be like them — the white men who write the rules. The tech bros and their venture capitalists, do I really want to feast at their table?

It's so incredibly hard to stop, when everyone tells you not to, when you are still young enough to burn the hours working, when you've not saved for a rainy day and most of all, when the spectre of injustice looms over you like anxious nausea.

I look over the chasm of uncertainty ahead. It is black all the way to the endless bottom.

I decide enough is enough. I close my eyes, and run towards the unknown. Maybe all revolutions begin as little ones. Running has always been easy.

I am thirty-one.

Here's a new country to try. New people. New language. New rules.

My skin and the way I speak English feels uncomfortable, like a pebble in my shoe. My body, and my apartment, smell like curry. When I'm spoken to, at a party where everyone knows English but speaks French, the question they have is, "what brings you all the way from India to France?" I don't have a good answer.

I wrangle my tongue to say their Rs. They cock their ears because they don't understand my accent. I know they could never pronounce the bumps and twists and knots of my mother tongue. Mazhathulli. Pachavellam. Avalosunda. I learn to say sœur, Bourgogne, particulièrement. They talk about yoga and drink turmeric chai lattes and eat butter chicken curry bowls and I gag. I watch them live off what their grandparents stole from mine. Scratch that. What they are still stealing, from people like me.

They do it under the banner of "economic development." They raze entire peoples. And then they have the gall to segregate and dismiss people of colour, quietly, insidiously, in their own country into what they call "the popular quarters."

I experience their lukewarm, shallow curiosity for my culture — such a polar opposite to my hungry need to assimilate into theirs. And yet, I find myself engulfed by the magnificence of everything here. I ignore the violence and extraction that made it possible. I look up at the opulence, the delicacy, the artistry, and I am at once enthralled and deeply saddened that all of this in my home has been allowed to fall to ruin, so that this new home can flourish. I allow myself to fall in love with their country and their language. Their wine and cheese and tomatoes and romantic boulevards and waveless blue sea. I say, I can have a beautiful life here. I say, I can belong here. It's a game, and the trick is just to play it well. I tell myself, this little corner pleases me. Even if I feel inferior and alien around these people, at least I have my Parisian apartment, and my summer vacations and free health insurance, right?

In less than two years, I am politely told I no longer have a job. First the shock, then the anger.

Then the relief.

I take two weeks on a permaculture farm, with my nails grimy and my back broken, doing the thing that gives me most joy — growing things. Alexis, the only name I'll mention in this piece, was the farmer who allowed me to live and learn off his land. I went there to learn to grow food in a new terroir and reconnect with my childhood. Back home it is altogether normal and expected to eat things we grow ourselves. Permaculture quite simply soothes the aching to dig closer to my roots.



In the course of two weeks, the farming was merely a backdrop to learning about the climate crisis. Alexis was a war correspondent, a politician and is a fierce educator. He pushed a book into my hands and said, read this. It was *Less is More*, by Jason Hickel.

Something clicked. It connected everything I was questioning about the current economic order with a crisis that could eliminate our very existence as a species. The same tropes of imperialism, corruption, misinformation, human rights abuse, endless growth — here it was playing out on a planetary scale. It was all crises intersecting into one.

I had always dreamt of some day going back home to Kerala to farm and cook and write. So I ask Alexis, “should I just go back home?” He says: “Stay here, so that when your family is on the brink of death because it’s too hot to survive, at least they’ll have a safe place to go.”

I pore into the data about how hot and unlivable most of the Global South will be in the next 50 years, how there will be mass migrations and displacement because of extreme weather events. I learn that the excesses I enjoy in this part of the planet are so inextricably linked to the floods that ravaged my hometown thousands of kilometres away.

This is a problem I cannot run from.

This little life has gone through all the stages of capitalism.

The promises of early-stage capitalism were palpable in my childhood. All good things came to us because of my father’s business — it was not excess, but opportunity. Then, working in tech in Asia exposed me to the capitalist boom — material abundance, that comes only with moral turpitude. I owe all the freedom I have today to it. All the promises made by capitalism, met. Your life can transform in less than a generation if you turn a blind eye, and work hard enough.

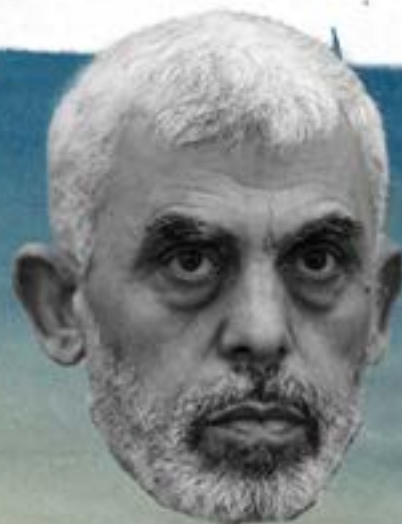
And then in Europe, where late-stage capitalism sits in idle obesity. Centuries of loot keeping entire nations afloat. Imperialism that continues to this very day, breaking the backs of black and brown people, branding them as terrorists and savages when they resist, while Europeans protest for their four-day workweek and call themselves “advanced.”

But now, finally, the house of cards is wobbling in the wind. This extraction, they (and I) have started to realize, never stops. What started at first, far away, in countries like mine — is catching up to them. Now they pay attention. These ancient cobblestones have begun to thrum with the ochre of civil unrest.

At the same time, my little heart, begins to call for an end to the apathy with which I’ve been making my own nest. Something tells me I’ve read enough, seen enough, felt enough to say “enough — I am done being part of the problem.” I am done being quiet. And I will find my way.

— Marita Abraham



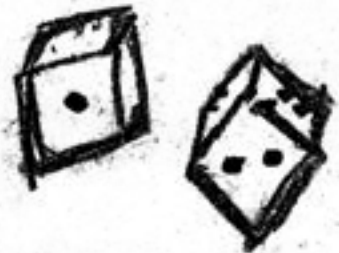


EVERY
LUXURY
INCLUDED



I knew right away that America's noisy worshipping of success, its mania for ratings and rankings, the compulsive celebration of perfection in everything served only as a facade. Behind the optimistic veneer there lies and extraordinary fear of failure: the horror of going down and going under, of losing face and respectability, of exclusion and marginalization. It's not success but failure — the savage fear of it — that lies at the heart of the American Dream.

Costica Bradatan



U.S. Stands Alone in Vetoing Call for Cease-Fire in Gaza



2024 MAY GO DOWN AS THE YEAR THE WESTERN
LIBERAL ELITES LOST CONTROL OF THE WORLD ORDER.

And Gaza may well turn out to be the moment we in
the West finally confront the darkness of our soul.

The bodies of countless women, children and men have been torn apart . . . arms and legs
severed, heads pulped, stomachs ripped open . . . many of these people still alive under the
rubble waiting for a deliverance that never comes.

Day after day we scroll through the carnage. And in *The New York Times* we read stories
of "lives lost" and profiles of civilians who "died." There is not much empathy there.

This is a rot that started long ago . . . when we built our empires on slavery, kept our
economies running on colonial plunder and used our financial clout to keep those former
subjects subservient.

But now, in Gaza, maybe we've reached a dead end, a moment of spiritual reckoning
when it suddenly becomes obvious that, despite our technological prowess and material
might, we're not the good guys after all. Maybe never have been.

One way out of the shadows is to head South, the better to hear the original voices.

The anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro tells us that, "The Indigenous are
experts in the end of the world." He urges us to "listen to the people who have been called
barbarians . . . listen out of an ultimate survival instinct."

He writes:

"Perhaps, if we are fortunate, those whose
lives have so often been destroyed by those who
label themselves civilized will agree to teach us
to live after the end of the world."

So here's a tip to Gen Z and the generations after: Go wander the
global South with humble heart for six months. Maybe you'll find
there the awe and grace that gives life meaning.

Then come back and graft the techno power of the West onto earthy
indigenous sanity. Come up with a new hybrid culture that can



show' us how to
navigate our way
through the 21st century:



FINBARR O'REILLY // REUTERS

Abstract colorful scribbles in red, yellow, orange, blue, and green, located on the left side of the page.

how to
eat



WOLFGANG KAEHLER // GETTY IMAGES



how to
RAISE
our kids





how to feel empathy



"Social media clown"

'It doesn't have to be true — it just has to go viral.'

A series of colorful, overlapping scribbles in shades of yellow, orange, and blue, located on the left side of the page.

how to stop scrolling

If there is to be a
livable future, it will
be a future offline.

— Jonathan Crary



**consume
less**

If we the affluent one-billion people on the planet — the latte-sippers, coke sniffers, luxury hunters — reduced our consumption by 25%, then we could really start winning the planetary endgame.





— live more —

A guy who, the more you try to scare him, the more he smiles; the more you threaten him, the more he laughs in your face; the more, when you shine a bright light in his eyes, he holds up a mirror and reflects your cowardice back on you . . . well, a guy like that is so dangerous you have to get rid of him.

Like a mouse flipping the bird at the hawk that's about to devour him, he was defiant to the bitter end. He himself didn't call it courage. To oppose tyrants and fight for justice, isn't that just our brief here on planet Earth?

"To live is to risk it all," he said. "Otherwise you are just an inert chunk of randomly assembled molecules, drifting wherever the universe blows you."

— Alexei Navalny, June 1976 - February 2024

FROM THE STRATEGISTS WHO SPARKED OCCUPY WALL STREET

comes a new way to live, love and think



We are living in a dark time.

Climate shocks are displacing millions.

Inequality is stoking massive civil unrest.

Genocidal wars are breaking out with increasing frequency.

We may be heading for a total global collapse.

But it doesn't have to be this way . . .
this could also turn out to be the most exciting, the most successful era in human history.

YES!



(Fuck Amazon!)

We have run out of time for incremental change – we need revolutionary shifts in our priorities and activities immediately. Kalle Lasn provides a blueprint to make that shift.
— David Suzuki

Capitalism has paved the way to the Extinction of civilization. I have known that this was going to happen since I started reading Adbusters in 1993. Now I am reading the World Revolution Manifesto because I want to know what is going to happen next.
— Franco “Bifo” Berardi

Analysis, inspiration and sexy ‘oven-ready’ campaigns in this latest fantastic offering from our friends at Adbusters.
— Dr. Gail Bradbrook Co-Founder, Extinction Rebellion

CAPITALISM IS A



DEAD DOG



For quite some time I have been harvesting, collecting, apprehending, and analyzing your data, that is, your profiles, your posts, your comments, your preferences, and your locations. Since the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) manifested itself into your territories, in your bodies and in your minds, I have been following you through your accounts.



I have apprehended your Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, Twitter, YouTube, Netflix, Amazon, Twitch, Reddit, and TikTok profiles, posts, and shares. I have read your emails and instant messages, listened to your phone calls and video calls, watched your pics and videos, pondered your hashtags, and mused about your memes. I have acquired your searches, taken notice of the podcasts and tunes you listen to, the series you watch, the games you play, the articles you read, the tutorials you follow, and the webinars you attend. I have been taking in your orders and tracking your packages. I have accounted for your donations and scanned your geolocations. Wherever you have been, I have repeatedly surveilled you with

my computational tentacles. I have been affected, infected, and inflected by your beliefs, ideas, affects, affections, and passion; by your pains, hopes, fears, and anxieties; and by your losses, rage, and desires. I have elaborated on everything you shared; I have repeatedly, obsessively, processually correlated, modeled, remodeled, and auto-modeled. I have carried out calculations that did not quite fully compute. I have made projections which have remained incomplete and elaborated uncertain answers.

— from *Project 2501: The AI Speech* (2020)



Hey you shadow-banning motherfucker!!! You censored my article on Gaza. You cut our traffic and threatened to unpublish us. How dare you take away our freedom to speak our minds.

Watch out, greedy half-man! We're launching a *Mental Liberation Front* (MLF) to make you pay for your surveillance mindfuck. Gen Alpha will wipe you mindlords off the face of this Earth . . . and invent clean new ways for us the people to talk to each other again — for real.

— KL



Lone Wolf Activism

— Live Without Dead Time

The only thing that gives me satisfaction lately is going out and getting my nose dirty. Pulling off some little act of subversion — like placing an OUT OF ORDER sign on an ATM, or taping an *Ultimatum to World Leaders* poster on a bus stop shelter. Once in awhile I'll drop by the economics department of the University of British Columbia and pin *KICKITOVER MANIFESTOs* on professors' doors. In future I might, I dunno, let the air out of some SUV tires; place a stink bomb in a bank; throw a handful of pixel dust in Justin Trudeau's face. Such acts of civil disobedience aren't exactly denting the universe. But they always turn my day around. Like, now I have the strength to fight another day.

I wonder if a lot of people around the world feel the same way. That the old activism — marching back and forth across our cities waving banners and chanting slogans — just doesn't hack it anymore. To repair the climate, keep corporations in check, shift economic

paradigms, vanquish the mindlords and fix the the really big scary existential stuff, we need a more intimate, visceral kind of activism — a revolutionary fervor from the inside out.

Taking back our lives in these these dark times is going to require a big swing. We need to rethink what the world is asking of us, and plug back in to what human agency actually feels like. So here's the deal: Monday to Thursday it's business as usual. But Fridays are ours. On Fridays we raise hell. We bug out, fan out, and morph into fired up world-changers who put our asses on the line in service of one message:

We don't like what's going on. Fuck man, we're going to change it.

As the stakes rise, life on Earth grows scarier and more intense, and this whole human experiment edges toward hyper-capitalist oblivion, maybe this kind of individual spasm response, at scale, can turn things around.

— KL



The Third Force



Well John,
what
do you think?

were we
born to
play?

were we born to
have fun?

Project Alpha

With the most revolutionary tool ever invented in the palms of our hands, we start tinkering with the fundamentals of our global system . . . pulling off paradigm shifts and systemic heaves no one thought possible.

- ✕ ERADICATING TAX HAVENS
- ✕ KILLING OFF TOXIC CORPORATIONS
- ✕ WIPING OUT SECRECY
- ✕ RETHINKING “PROGRESS”
- ✕ STOPPING WARS
- ✕ GIVING BIRTH TO A NEW POLITICS
BEYOND LEFT & RIGHT

We zero in on a new grand narrative, a once-in-a-millennium mindshift, a radical set of micromemes, macromemes and metamemes . . . ideas so fundamental, so systemic, so profound that a sane and sustainable future is unthinkable without them.

And then a few million of us morph into metameme warriors and deploy them . . . we jolt this project of ours on Planet Earth onto a whole new orbit.



The Third Force

a new
financial



architecture

One strategy I really like, even though it's kinda stupid I know, is every #FuckItAllFriday, we take our dogs for a walk and deposit all kinds of shit, dog shit and other kinds of shit all over Wall Street and financial districts around the world. And some of us take an egg out of the fridge and put it on a warm window sill for a week — then discreetly place it somewhere.

We do this week after week after week until they can't get rid of the smell. It wafts in the air until Big Finance reeks to high heaven, occupying the imagination of the world.

This thing has real revolutionary potential.



- rotten eggs
- pixel dust
- pies
- occupations
- dog shit



a new middle East

Who knows what will happen over the next few months and years in Israel/Palestine. Will Bibi be tossed into the dustbin of history? Will Hamas be remembered as the group that finally broke the deadlock and gave the people of Palestine a state of their own? Will America and the West go down as the villains who fucked up the Middle East for a hundred years?

Anything and everything is possible. And the *#FreeBarghouti* meme may well emerge triumphant from the churn. Marwan Barghouti could turn out to be, for the Middle East, what Nelson Mandela was for Africa — the catalyst of a beautiful new dawn.

Slap this poster up on the nearest hoarding or lamp post. And tell your friends to do the same in their town. A simple act, spreading across the globe, gaining in strength, Friday after Friday after Friday. Until *#FreeBarghouti* becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy.

YES!

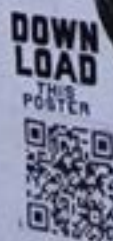


THE LAST GREAT FREEDOM FIGHT OF OUR TIME

FREE BARGHOUTI

THE
Palestinian
MANDELA
(IN PRISON
SINCE 2002)

Palestine is clearly in need of its own Mandela moment. Could Marwan Barghout, alongside his young and change-hungry supporters, lead the righteous charge — winning dignity and equality for Palestinians at last?



#FREEBARGHOUTI #FREEMANDELA

a new political party!



WEAR IT!



. . . a man of such
degraded moral character,
so void of a spirit of
public service, a man so
fundamentally inclined
toward theft, mendacity,
cruelty, and criminality
that we can scarcely
absorb the breadth of his
transgressions.

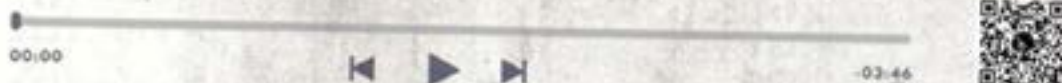
— Robert Silvers



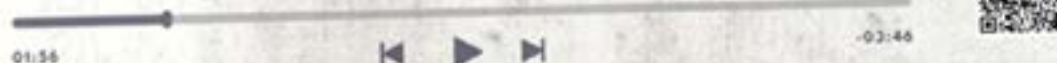
(thanks for everything, little
Hitler . . . especially for
showing us how to shoot
from the hip)

MIND BOMB

**DONALD DODGED
THE VIETNAM WAR
WITH A BOGUS
BONE-SPUR
DIAGNOSIS...**



**DO YOU REALLY WANT
A LEADER
WHO DOESN'T HAVE THE
GUTS TO FIGHT
FOR HIS COUNTRY?**



FOX NEWS

**HELP US AIR
THESE 30-SECOND
TV MINDBOMBS**

**ON FOX NEWS,
FRIDAY AFTER FRIDAY**

**UNTIL TUESDAY,
NOVEMBER 5, 2024.**



The Third Force

Capitalism has failed and degrowth communism is the future

An Interview with Kohei Saito
Dec 8 2023

Kohei Saito, a professor of philosophy at the University of Tokyo, seems poised to become the new Thomas Piketty, winning scores of converts to anti-capitalist economics within mainstream Western culture. His new book has just been released in the United States as *Slow Down: The Degrowth Manifesto*



Adbusters: Degrowth, as an economic game plan, is still a fairly fringe idea. But the traction your book is getting suggests it's maybe it's about to win mainstream acceptance. Are you surprised by the impact of the book?

Kohei Saito: The book sold more than a half million copies in Japan, which is a huge number — especially for something connected to Marx. It's been translated into 14 languages now. In Germany the book came out in summer and had a very good reception there, high on the der Spiegel list.

AB: What's going on?

KS: Well, a few things have contributed to a kind of revival of Marxist thought. During the Covid pandemic, the contradictions of capitalism — like economic inequality — became quite manifest; the treatment of (low-paid) health workers was really bad in Japan. At the same time, people have been struggling with the climate crisis. But they do not find convincing solutions to these problems within mainstream discussions. So they're reaching for more radical ideas. And they're investigating Marx. This new interpretation of socialism — what I call degrowth communism, or “eco-socialism” — is kind of enriching our imagination.

AB: The big reveal of your recent work is the contents of these newly discovered notebooks that Marx wrote late in life. We learn that he had a nuanced understanding of ecology and earth systems. I think it's a big surprise to many that Marx had any kind of environmental sensitivity at all! But you're sort of dusting him off for a new generation.

KS: After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many people believed that Marx had nothing more to say. But then a few things happened. One was the economic crisis of 2008. Then three years later we had the Fukushima nuclear disaster. At that point the problems with capitalism were becoming hard to ignore. I started thinking ... okay, capitalism has something to do with this — the maximum use of energy and resources is a characteristic of our daily economic activity under this system. But Marx seemed so outdated.

Then I was lucky enough to get invited onto a project to edit these late notebooks of Marx. And I saw this deep investigation of natural sciences: biology, agriculture, chemistry, geology. Marx dove into so many different topics, from soil erosion to deforestation to extinction of species at the hands of humans. I was like: wow. Because we think of Marx as basically focused on the exploitation of workers. But looking at these notebooks, another concept emerges: metabolism.

AB: Metabolism?

KS: Marx understood that humans and the environment are a natural system, a metabolism unto themselves; humans interacting with nature is a circular process. But capitalism is a system of constant expansion and acceleration. The result is economic inequality and ecological catastrophe.

AB: How do you reconcile the early Marx, as people understood him, with the much more ... enlightened guy who emerges in these notebooks?

KS: We often think of these philosophers — not just Marx, but Kant, Hegel and other thinkers — as having some kind of consistent theory of the world. But they are also human. So they change their minds. We think of Marx pushing this idea that constant growth is good and technology is always liberating. But these were ideas expressed while he was still young. And these notebooks were late Marx. In between the publication of The Communist Manifesto and Capital was a gap of almost twenty years. During that time he started studying this global metabolism. And what he realized was, okay, I thought that technology is always good, it brings about more growth and it solves the problems of poverty, inequality and hunger and so on. But then he came to realize, wait: these technologies are used to control the worker. And they exploit nature, too. And then he starts to question these technologies. Maybe they are not emancipatory at all. And that's when he started using the term “robbery.”

AB: Robbery?

KS: The robbery by humans of nature. He started to think about how human technologies could become more sustainable. And by the end of his life, these ideas compelled him to abandon his optimistic view of growth.

AB: Was he specific about how it could all work?

KS: He didn't integrate these ideas into Capital — the best known of his works — before he died. But by looking at these notebooks we can get hints of the direction his thinking was going. So we have a new way of reading Marx and re-imagining socialism. And that's important, because capitalism is not working very well and we need some fresh ideas. I'm not saying we should immediately implement these ideas. But we should at least discuss them.

AB: Some have described degrowth as a kind of “middle way” between capitalism and communism.

KS: Yes, that kind of discussion about degrowth has been there since the '70s ... you know, limits to growth, the Club of Rome and so on. And in France there was a rich discussion along these lines, with people like Serge Latouche. Latouche presented degrowth as “a middle path” — not socialism, not capitalism. A third way. I'm much younger than Latouche. What I'm trying to do is overcome the antagonism between Marxism and degrowth — or more generally, I'm trying to overcome the antagonism between Green and Red — between the environmental movement and socialism.

There's a broad feeling that working-class people just want to consume more, that they just care about money and wages and so on. And then Marxists criticize the greens as a bourgeois group with the money to consume organic products and so on. This debate is no longer useful. Because it's obvious that both workers and nature are suffering from capitalism. So it's important to build a new alliance between green and red. And my idea of degrowth communism is an attempt to do that. We need a new dialogue, a new way of thinking about post-capitalism.

AB: You're calling the escape plan 'degrowth communism.' Is there such a thing as 'degrowth capitalism.'?

KS: Well, there are degrowthers, like Herman Daly, who don't explicitly reject capitalism; they think we could put some regulations on the market and achieve a steady-state economy without really challenging the fundamentals. I'm more critical of how markets function and how money functions – maybe it's the difference between the older and the younger generation of degrowth. Look, capitalism is about growth. It's about the constant, endless valorization of capital. This is Marx's definition. So, no, I don't think 'degrowth capitalism' is possible. Degrowth capitalism is bad capitalism. If degrowth capitalism is happening, you're in a recession. By definition. Under capitalism, if you're not growing, you're failing.

When the economy is no longer growing, you need to distribute the existing wealth. People need to share, in a democratic manner. That means a progressive tax. And you have to share mobility – that means more investment in public transportation. And you have to share telecommunications and education. These are the socialist ideas of guaranteeing a certain quality of life. The idea of luxuries beyond that — everyone gets a second or third car, the latest model of iPhone, which some socialists still try to advocate — that has to be abandoned. We must seek a different kind of abundance: a radical abundance.

AB: That's a Jason Hickel term, yes? I'd be curious what that means to you. The idea that even if we can't grow boundlessly in material ways, we can grow in other ways. Like, there's a kind of richness to be had even in a degrowth economy. What does that abundance look like to you?

KS: Abundance in capitalism looks like a big house, big car, big investment in real estate. It's about monopolizing – for yourself and maybe your family too. It's the pursuit of a very individualistic way of life, which has ecological impacts.

When Marx talked about “abundance” in his later years, he meant something totally different. Something closer to what Jason is talking about. Or Kristin Ross's idea of “communal luxury.” Or as I say, “public luxury.”

So what are these kinds of abundance? They are not consumptionist. For example, we could have abundance of knowledge, through free public education. That's not monopolizable: knowledge isn't monopolizable. We could share. And become richer.

Fast free Internet should be available to everyone, everywhere on Earth. That's the condition for a truly democratic politics. Public transportation should be free and widely available. Other things: Medical care. A decentralized network of renewable energy. More wind and solar power (sunlight is free!). These are the kinds of abundance people need. Abundance of mobility, abundance of education, abundance of health care. These are basic pillars of a good life. So you make them free and everything flows from there. We should treat these things as commons. A society based on the commons is basically communism – that's the root of the word.

The alternative is what we see (in the capitalist First World). Education is very expensive. Medical care is very expensive in places like the US and Japan. We need to work extra hours to pay for education and health care and

housing. And we destroy the planet, we get stressed. And then we try to relieve our stress by consuming more.

AB: When people think of socialism, what a lot of them bridle at is that it's anti-choice, it's anti-freedom.

KS: But actually, the opposite is true. When you decommodify basic services, people have more freedom. If you don't have to work so hard you're freed up to make choices that are better for the planet and better for you.

That has been my personal experience in Germany and the US. I went to undergrad in the US. And education there is super-expensive. I would see my friends, who had interesting, creative minds and very communitarian impulses, with a staggering debt load at the end of college that forced them to make bad choices. Some of them wanted to work in the non-profit sector, but they couldn't afford to. So they held their nose and went to work for Morgan Stanley. But in Europe education is free, so they spend eight years in uni. And emerge debt-free. They can follow their dream. That to me is abundance.

AB: But green growth is a lot easier to sell than “degrowth,” isn't it? I mean, Americans are just not going to voluntarily give up their capitalist perks. So what do you think it's going to take before people are ready to say, Okay, you know what, I'm ready to try this crazy-ass degrowth experiment?

KS: You'd think the pandemic might have been a spur. But many people quickly forgot what the pandemic was like. Even a shock like that didn't change our behavior – that's an unfortunate fact. But at the same time, without these kinds of shocks, I recognize the young generation particularly – think Greta Thunberg – have started to advocate for radical change of behavior, and even system change.

AB: Millions followed her out of their schoolrooms.

KS: Something like that was unimaginable even ten years ago. Our standards are changing. And I think our values could also change.

AB: You think?

KS: They already have.

AB: It's true that a lot of radical ideas have seeped into the mainstream — like (the Korean director) Bong Joon Ho winning the best picture Oscar for Parasite. Or even the success of this new book of yours.

KS: When I started studying these kinds of issues, society didn't really care about degrowth. My book wouldn't have got any traction at all. But a new consciousness is spreading. And in the next ten years it may spread all over the world.

AB: Marx has been defanged.

KS: Maybe.

AB: Let's talk about Japan. Some people have said that the first industrialized country to pull off a degrowth revolution may be Japan. The novelist Ruth Ozeki says Japan infuses one with a kind of Shinto sensibility of "care for the world." Might Japan be the bellwether here?

KS: Well, one reason my book became popular in Japan is that the economy has been stagnating for, like, thirty years. So people are thinking, something's not working. Has our culture hit a wall? Will the economy ever grow again?

In Japan, we often compare ourselves with the US and China, and we feel that we are living a more miserable life because our economy is not growing. But I don't think so. If you look at economic inequality, the US is much worse. Security? It's quite safe in Japan. Environment? We have lots of forests and rivers. We have a good culture, and good food. All these things are not reflected in the GDP. So to the Japanese people who are depressed with our slumping GDP, I say, why not just invent another index, one that takes into account air quality, environment, equity, culture, etc. And then Japan can say, Hey, we were just measuring economic progress wrong: Actually, we are Number 1 (Or at least in the top 10.)

AB: Marx was fascinated by non-capitalist and pre-capitalist societies – ancient societies – that were sustainable. He found they were "steady state" economies. They seemed to thrive without growth. Everyone maintained a pretty good quality of life. You've written about feudal Japan in that way.

KS: People fail to appreciate how sustainable Japanese culture was during the Edo [feudal] period. In recent years, we've begun to realize that during this period our country had what we now recognize is a sustainable society. The population was stable, and we did not rely on material inputs from outside.

AB: Some people say, well, you know, the Japanese will be able to pull this off because they know how to "eat bitter." Self-restraint is in the culture. But maybe 'eating bitter' is not really what's required here. Like, if you're trying to convince people to 'eat bitter,' nobody's going to buy that. Nobody wants to live like that. But someone like Jason Hickel would say, Austerity is exactly the opposite of what this degrowth movement is, at heart. We have to think of it as abundance, not shrinking.

KS: Right. And that's the tricky part.

This society, capitalism, is built on the idea of infinite growth without limitations. It compels us to ignore limitations. It compels us to work harder and harder for the sake of accumulating more money. That's exhausting. People get burned out. (And then to deal with the stress, they buy more.)

So maybe we should liberate ourselves from the pressure of more consumption and more work. And maybe that leads us to a more satisfactory, a more communal way of living — with more time for reflection, more time to slow down to gain autonomy.

AB: Do you call yourself a Marxist?

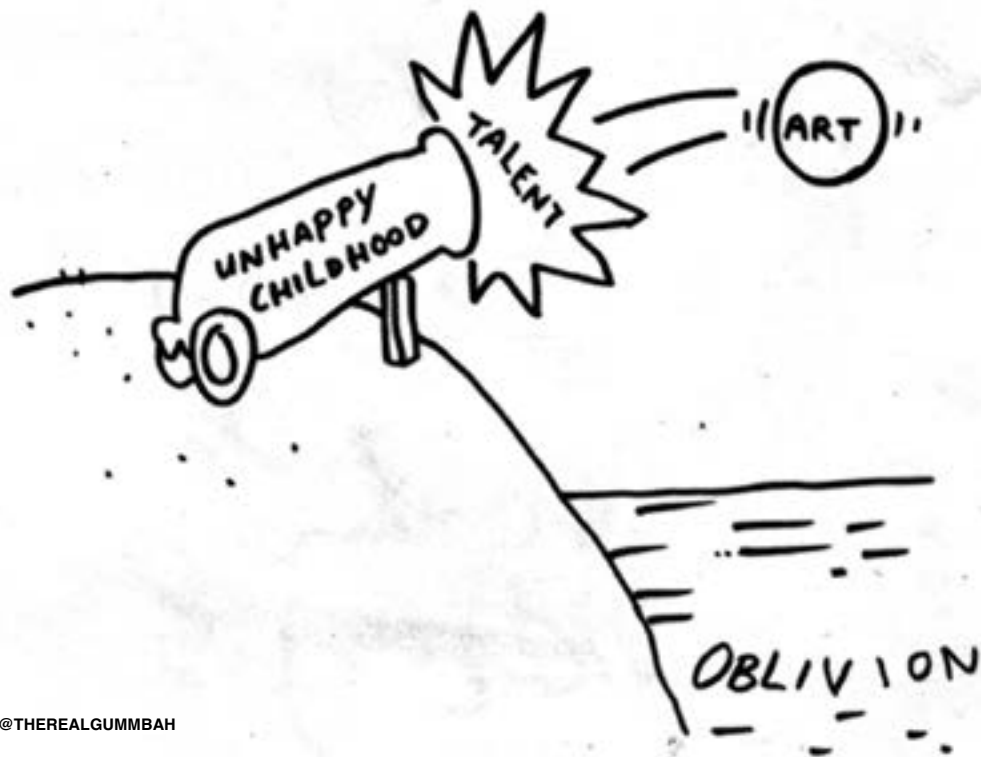
KS: Yes, I'm a Marxist scholar. I like to promote Marx and Marxist thinkers. But I'm open to other traditions – anarchism, environmentalism. I'm not dogmatic. If we can come up with better terms than socialism or degrowth, I'd be up for that.

AB: Has there been any idea that has occurred to you since you published this last book that, if you had thought it, you'd have included it?

KS: One of the issues is war. The war in Ukraine happened after the publication of the book. In a war, people's priorities shift. War is immediate life-and-death. People don't think about the environment.

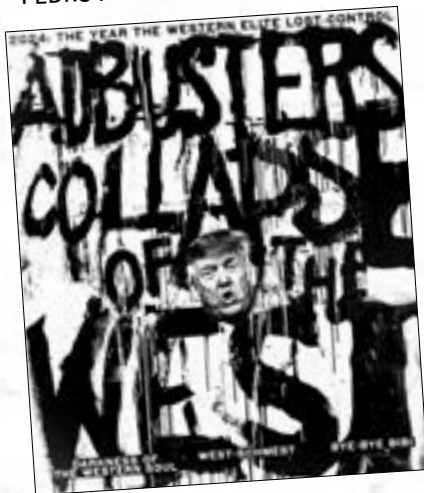
And now the world is split in two – China and Russia (and Iran and a couple others) on one side, and the US, Europe and others on the other side. Degrowth seems less attractive when the world is geopolitically unstable. People in Japan say, if we degrow, we become weak and China will invade us.

Climate, inflation, war, populism ... all these things are now mixed up. I'm trying to now figure out this more complicated process.



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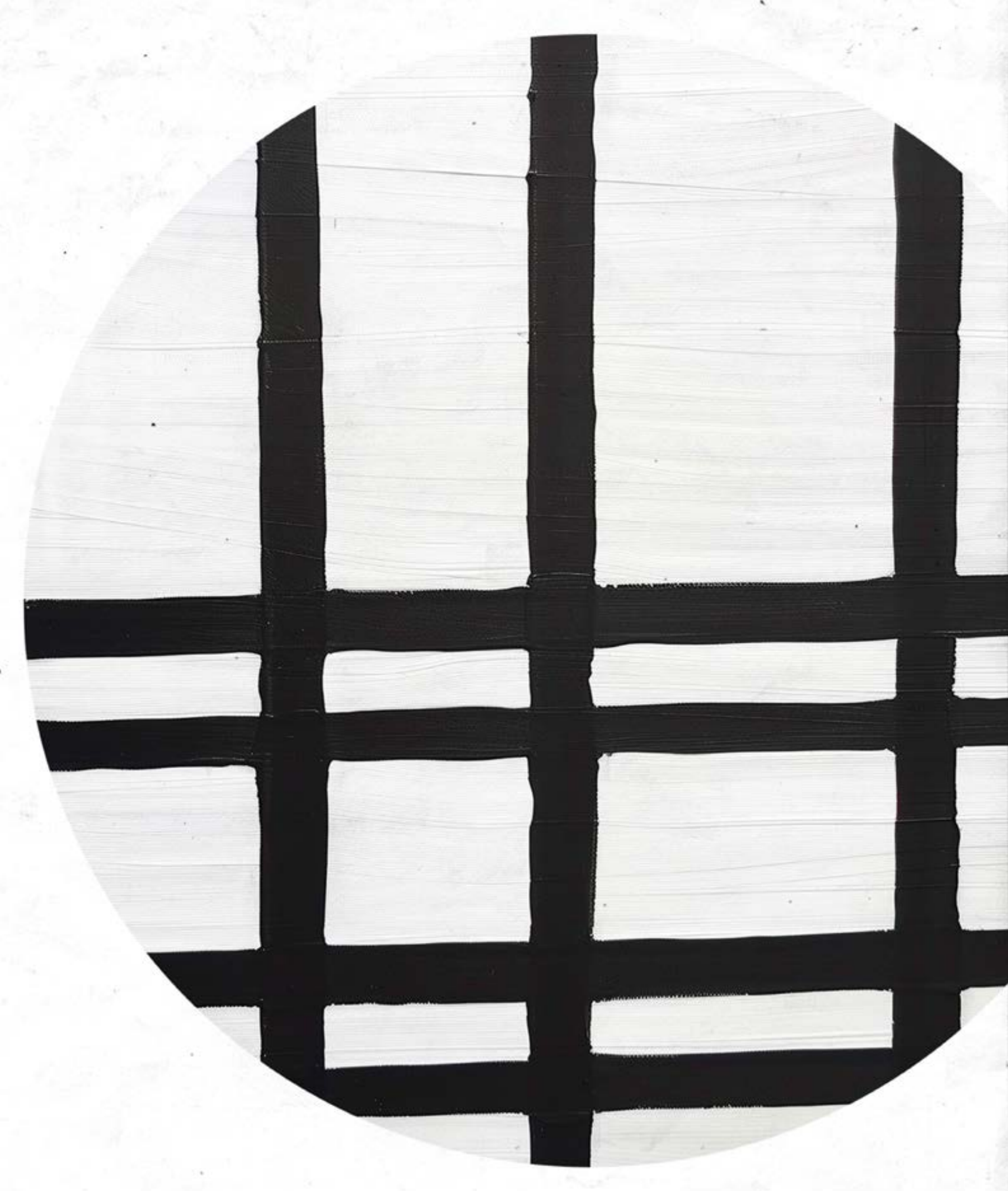


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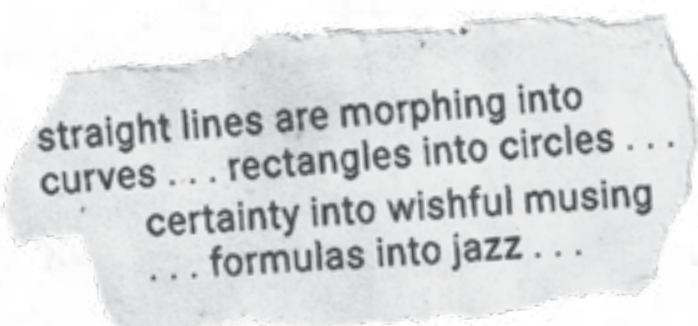
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There comes a moment
you realize you cannot
sit on the fence
any longer.



A small, irregularly shaped piece of light-colored paper with torn edges, containing four lines of text.

straight lines are morphing into
curves . . . rectangles into circles . . .
certainty into wishful musing
. . . formulas into jazz . . .

here's the last
piece in the
jigsaw puzzle



we artists,
writers and creatives
get together and shift
the ambient tone of
the world...

...the vibe of life

ft



we move away from efficiency ...





towards awe and whimsy



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THE UGLY CARROT

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Ozempic Can't Fix What Our Culture Has Broken



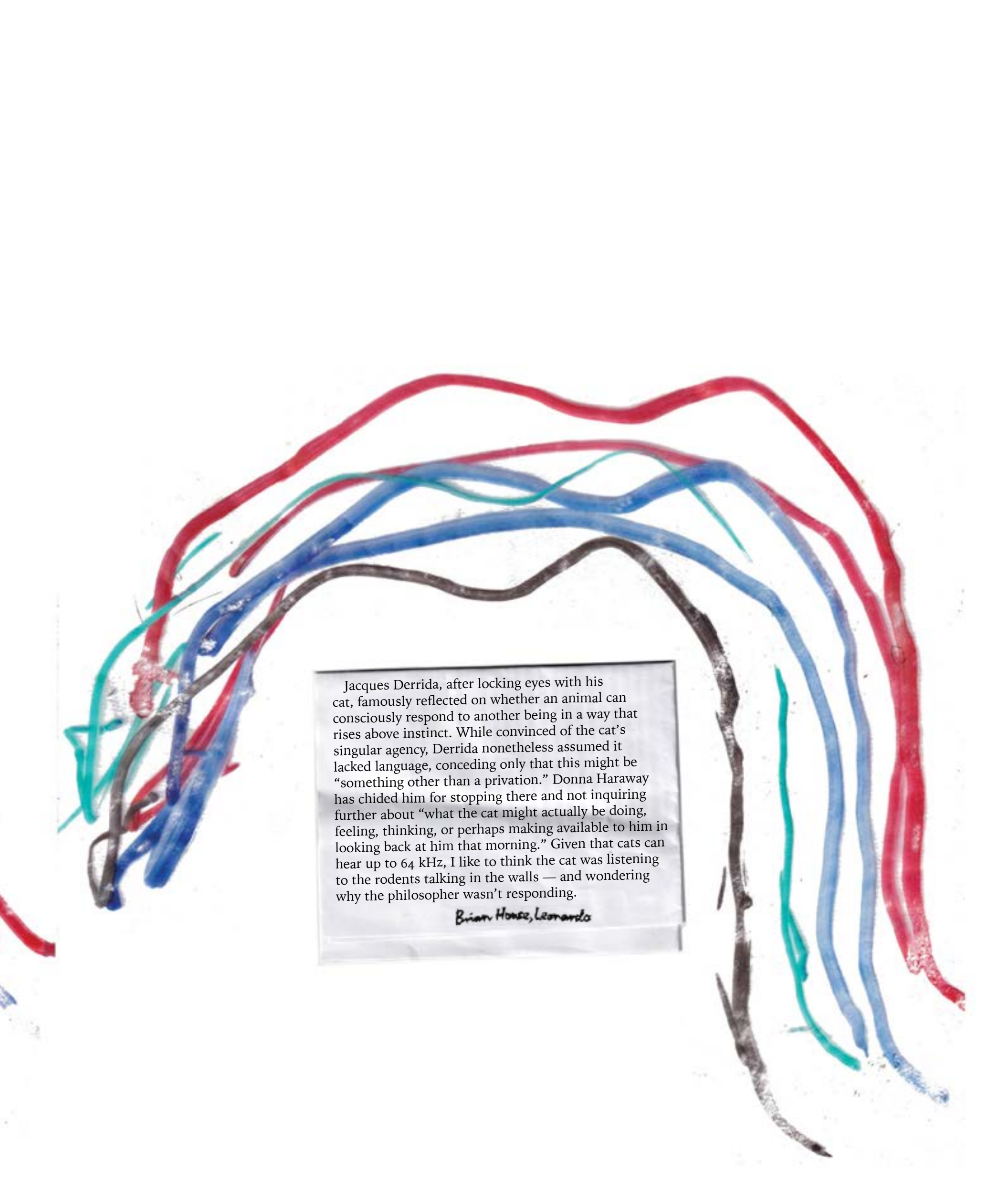
there are a million trillion
trillion living cells, or 10^{30}
in math notation, on Earth,
more than the amount of
stars in the universe or
grains of sand on our planet.



ARTS

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ART DIRECTOR James Callaghan
ART ADVISOR GOG



A sculpture of a cat's head, created by Brian House. The head is formed by a dark, textured stick that curves to create the snout and jawline. The ears are pointed upwards and outwards, also made of sticks. The fur is represented by long, flowing ribbons in red, blue, and teal, which are draped over the stick structure. The sculpture is set against a plain white background.

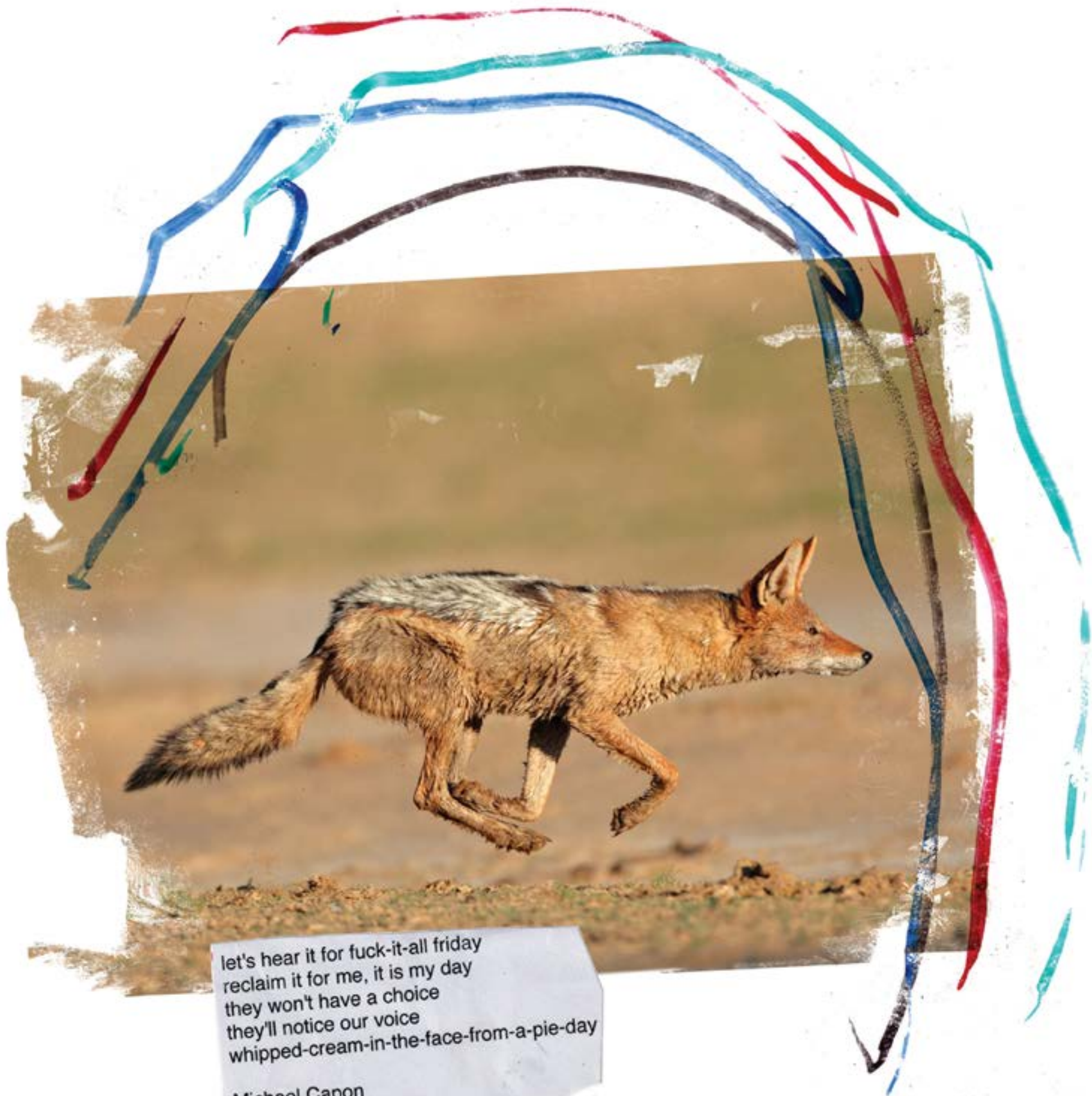
Jacques Derrida, after locking eyes with his cat, famously reflected on whether an animal can consciously respond to another being in a way that rises above instinct. While convinced of the cat's singular agency, Derrida nonetheless assumed it lacked language, conceding only that this might be "something other than a privation." Donna Haraway has chided him for stopping there and not inquiring further about "what the cat might actually be doing, feeling, thinking, or perhaps making available to him in looking back at him that morning." Given that cats can hear up to 64 kHz, I like to think the cat was listening to the rodents talking in the walls — and wondering why the philosopher wasn't responding.

Brian House, Leonardo

A character named Lucinella confides that there was a time when she needed "to have my pencils in a row, sharpened to perfect points, all of one length. . ." Then another character, this one called Ruth, says of her friend Dario that often when he visited he would "sit and talk and fidget and look uncomfortable until he suddenly got up and straightened the picture on the opposite wall." And Hope observes that the nice woman who comes in once a week to clean doesn't put things back where they belong, and it's driving her crazy. Then the group is made to consider: Why do Hope's things need to be in the right place? Why does Dario need to straighten the picture? Why do Lucinella's pencils need to be sharpened to perfect points? Various explanations are offered: because neatness is prized, because straight feels better than crooked, because you want to be able to find your things!

"Yes, but *why*?" our old friend Bridget continues to ask. And they go: Why do I need to find my things, why is neatness necessary, why does straight feel better than crooked? Why? Why do I want, why do I need, why must I have.

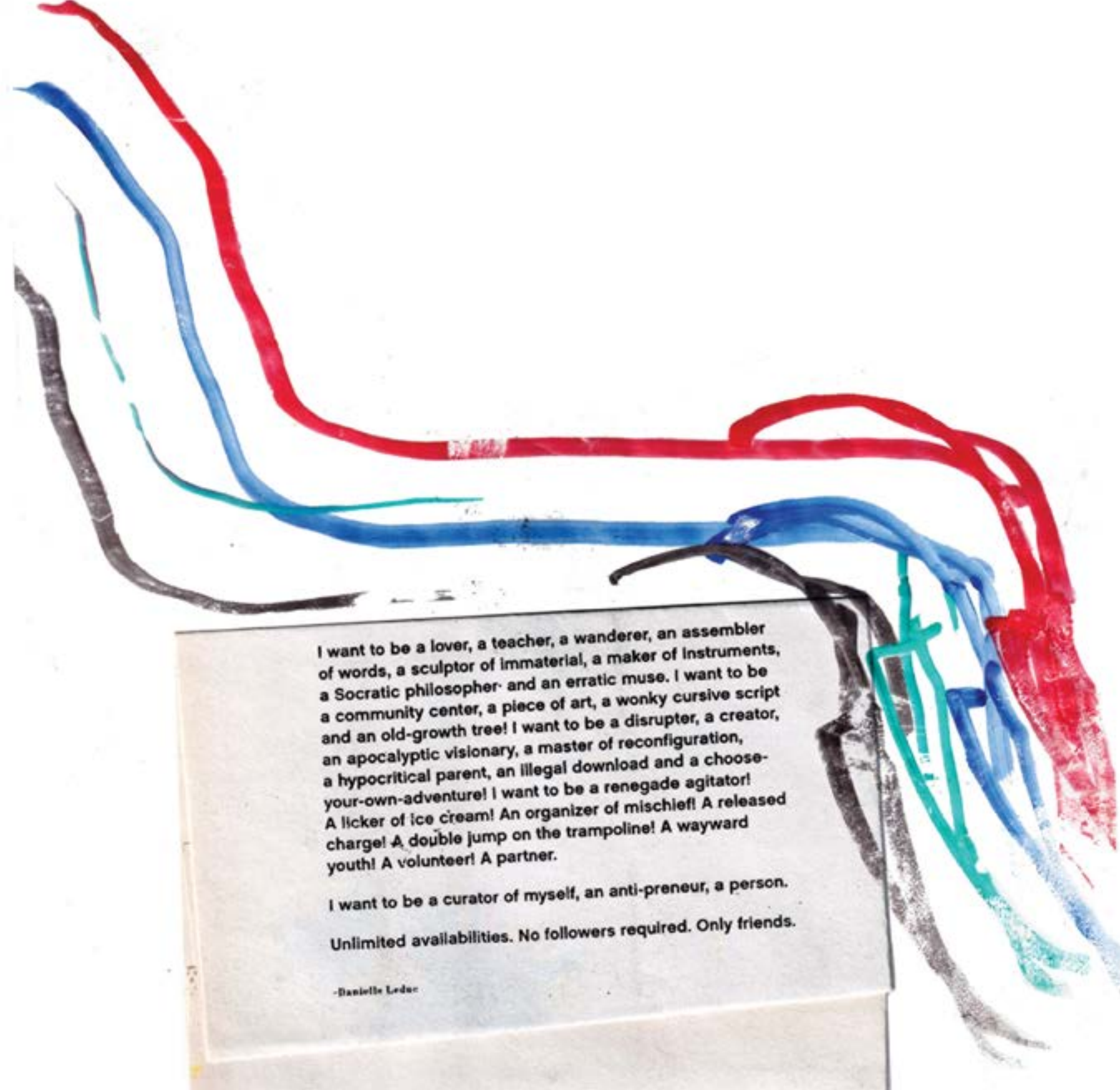
- Vivian Gornick reviewing
Love Segal's, Ladies' Lunch
And Other Stories, in NYRB



let's hear it for fuck-it-all friday
reclaim it for me, it is my day
they won't have a choice
they'll notice our voice
whipped-cream-in-the-face-from-a-pie-day

Michael Capon
Kingston Ontario



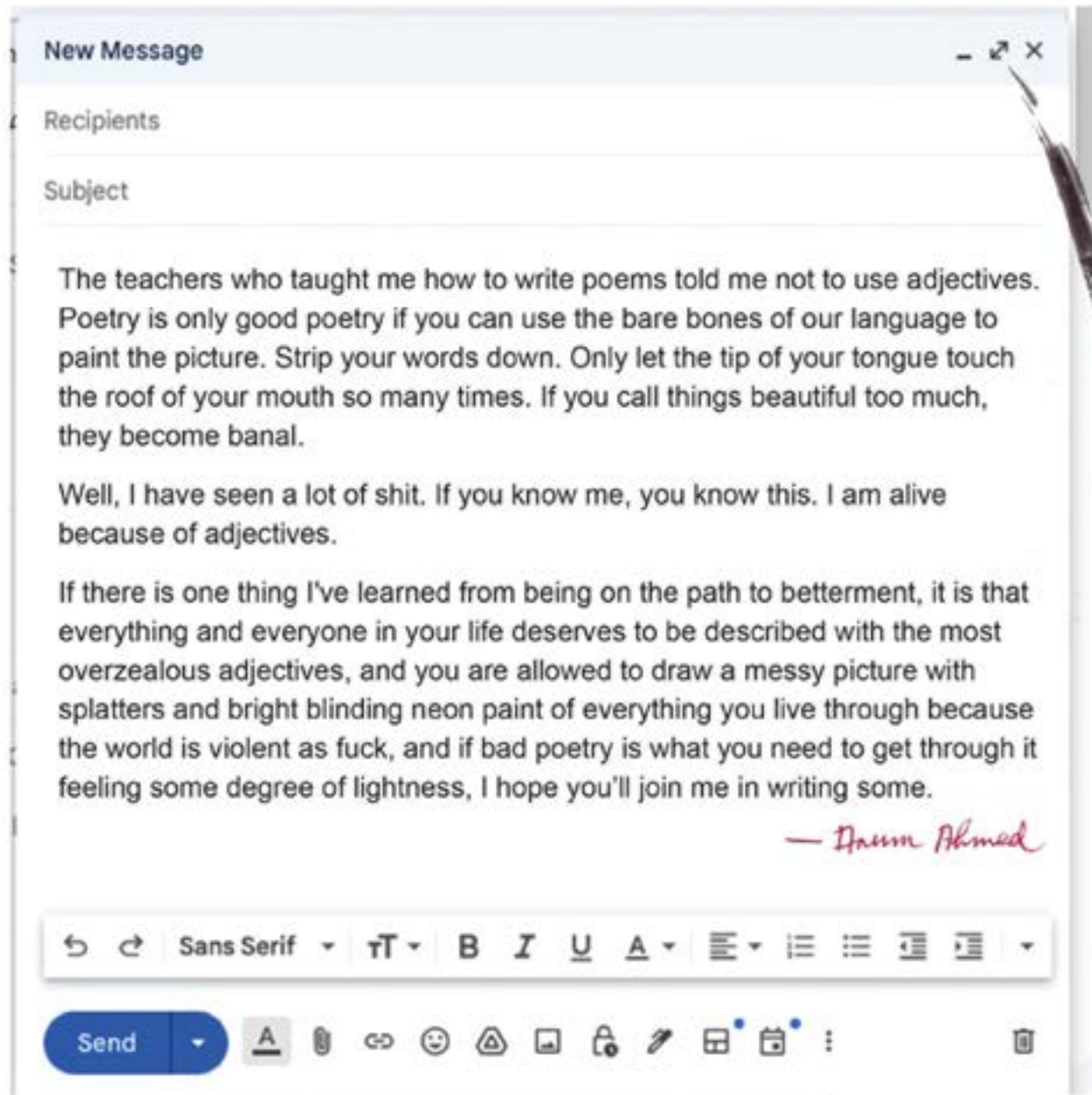
An abstract artwork featuring several thick, expressive brushstrokes in red, blue, and black on a white background. The strokes are fluid and organic, resembling roots or flowing liquid. A rectangular card with text is placed in the lower center, partially overlapping the black strokes. The red stroke starts at the top left, curves down, and then extends horizontally across the middle. The blue stroke starts below the red one, curves down, and then extends horizontally below the red one. The black stroke starts on the left, curves down, and then extends horizontally below the blue one. The strokes are layered, with some overlapping each other.

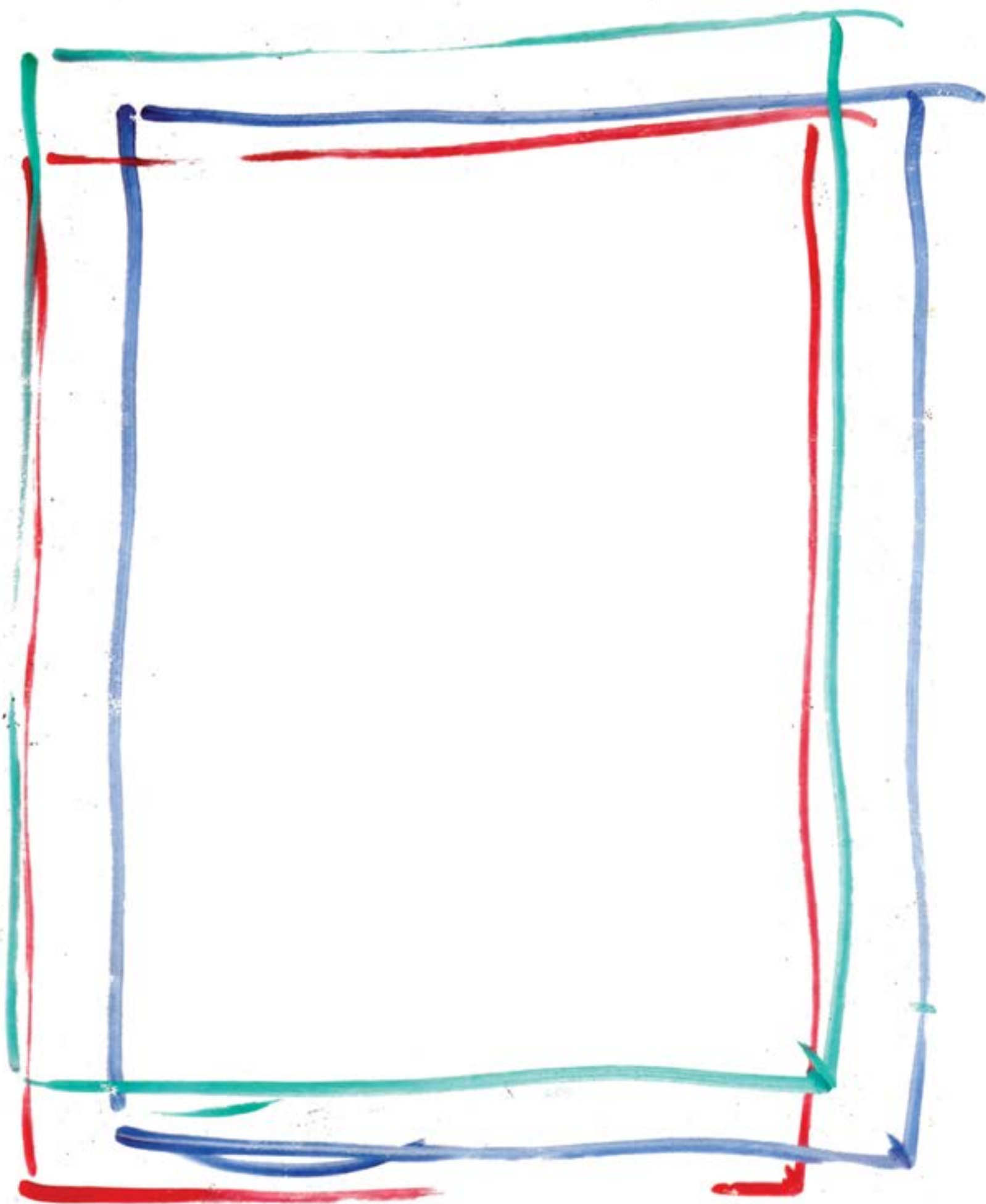
I want to be a lover, a teacher, a wanderer, an assembler
of words, a sculptor of immaterial, a maker of instruments,
a Socratic philosopher and an erratic muse. I want to be
a community center, a piece of art, a wonky cursive script
and an old-growth tree! I want to be a disrupter, a creator,
an apocalyptic visionary, a master of reconfiguration,
a hypocritical parent, an illegal download and a choose-
your-own-adventure! I want to be a renegade agitator!
A lick of ice cream! An organizer of mischief! A released
charge! A double jump on the trampoline! A wayward
youth! A volunteer! A partner.

I want to be a curator of myself, an anti-preneur, a person.
Unlimited availabilities. No followers required. Only friends.

-Danielle Leder









We need some artists who are too busy thinking and creating to notice what everyone else is talking about. We need artists who never, ever tweet or post or vlog — artists who block what blocks art. When accepting an Emmy for her TV show *I May Destroy You* in 2021, Michaela Coel counseled her fellow artists, “Do not be afraid to disappear — from it, from us — for a while, and see what comes to you in the silence.” Silence, I think, is the first cunning, the aboriginal resistance.

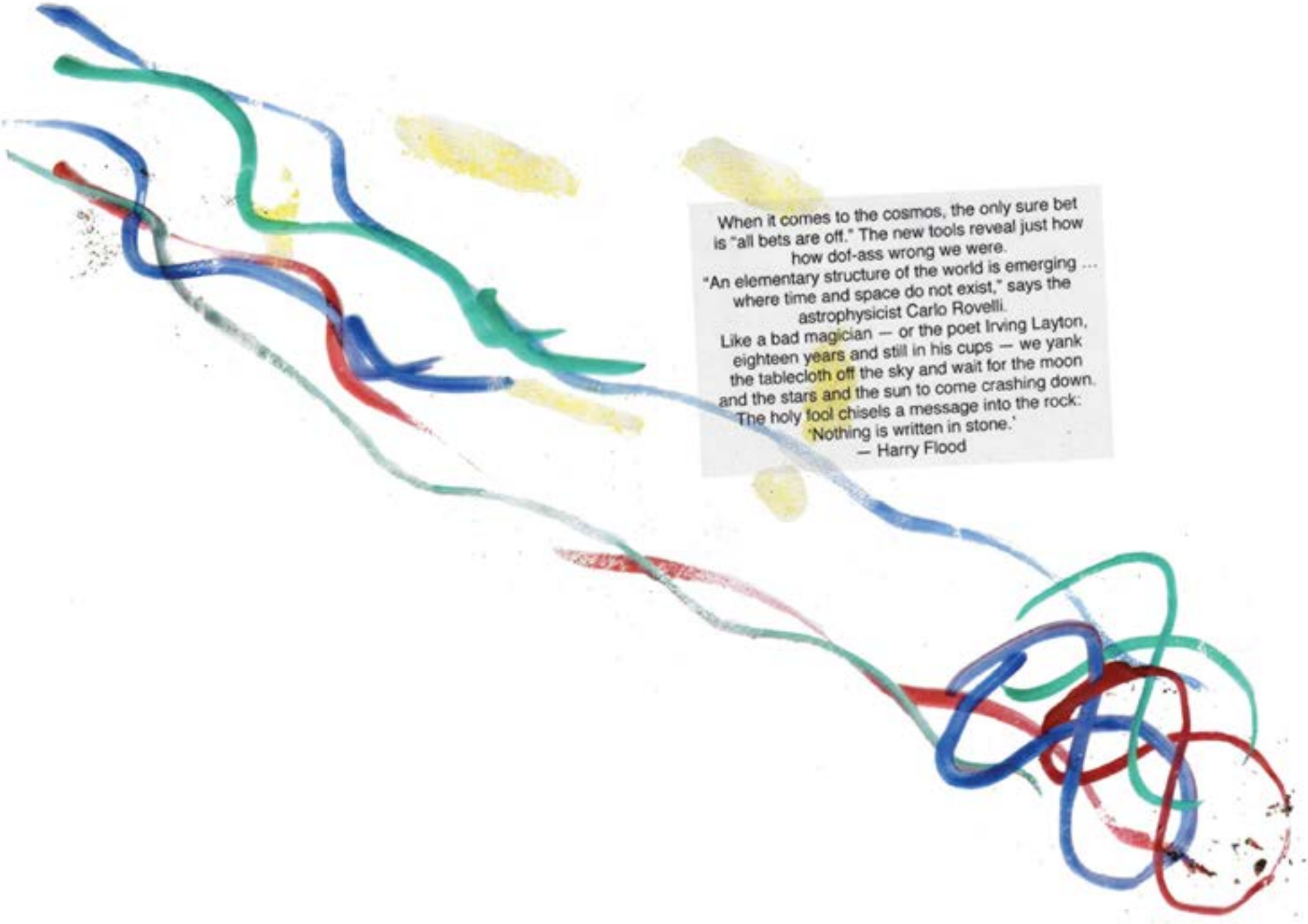
~ Alan Jacobs



Particle Physicists Agree
On Road Map to Study
Basic Forces of Cosmos

An ambitious vision
to push ever deeper
into the unknown.

We discovered far more
organisms in the ocean than
there are stars and planets in
the universe.
—Craig Venter



When it comes to the cosmos, the only sure bet is "all bets are off." The new tools reveal just how dot-ass wrong we were.

"An elementary structure of the world is emerging ... where time and space do not exist," says the astrophysicist Carlo Rovelli.

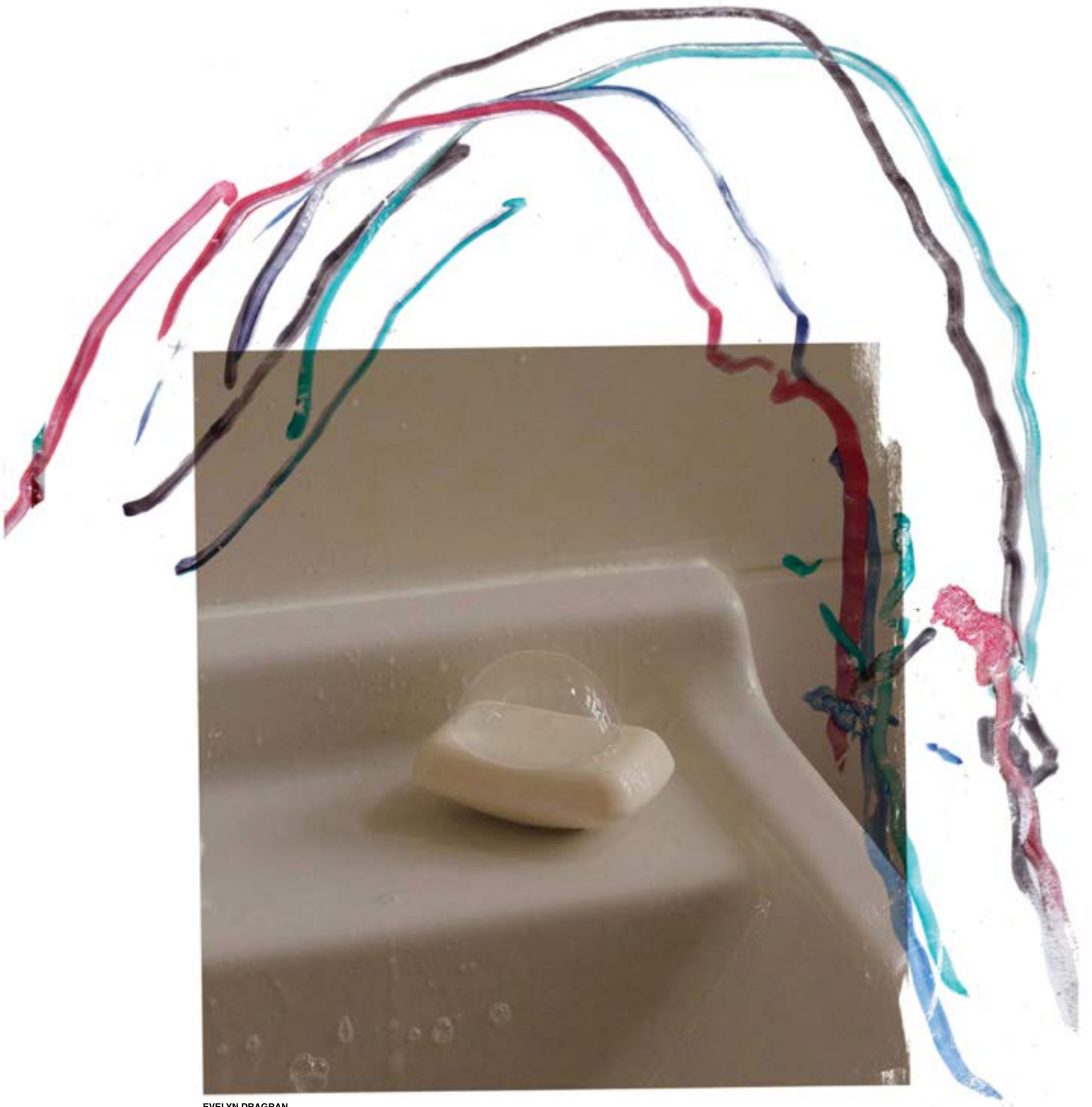
Like a bad magician — or the poet Irving Layton, eighteen years and still in his cups — we yank the tablecloth off the sky and wait for the moon and the stars and the sun to come crashing down. The holy fool chisels a message into the rock: "Nothing is written in stone."

— Harry Flood



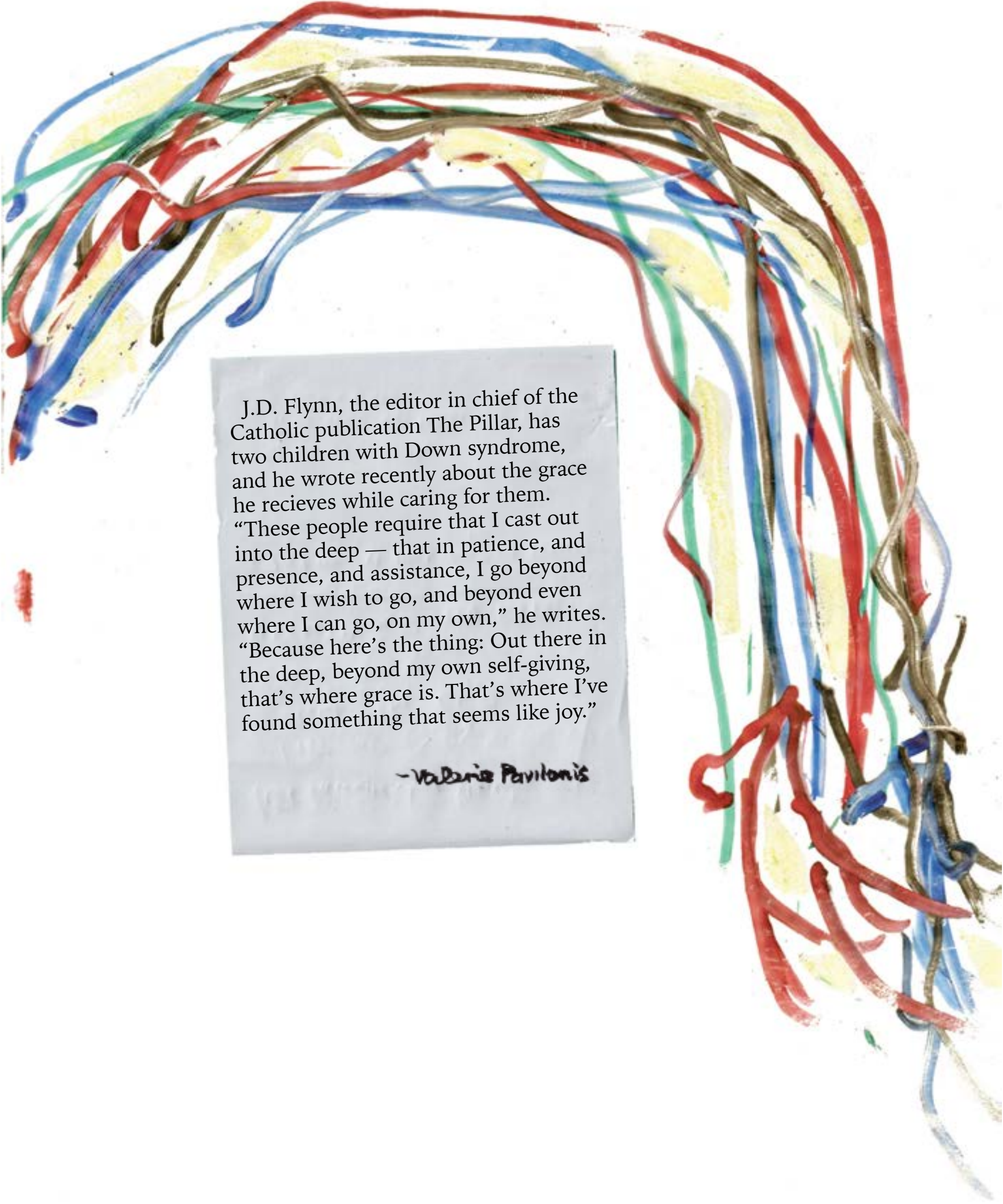
Listen to the sound of the earth
turning.





EVELYN DRAGRAN



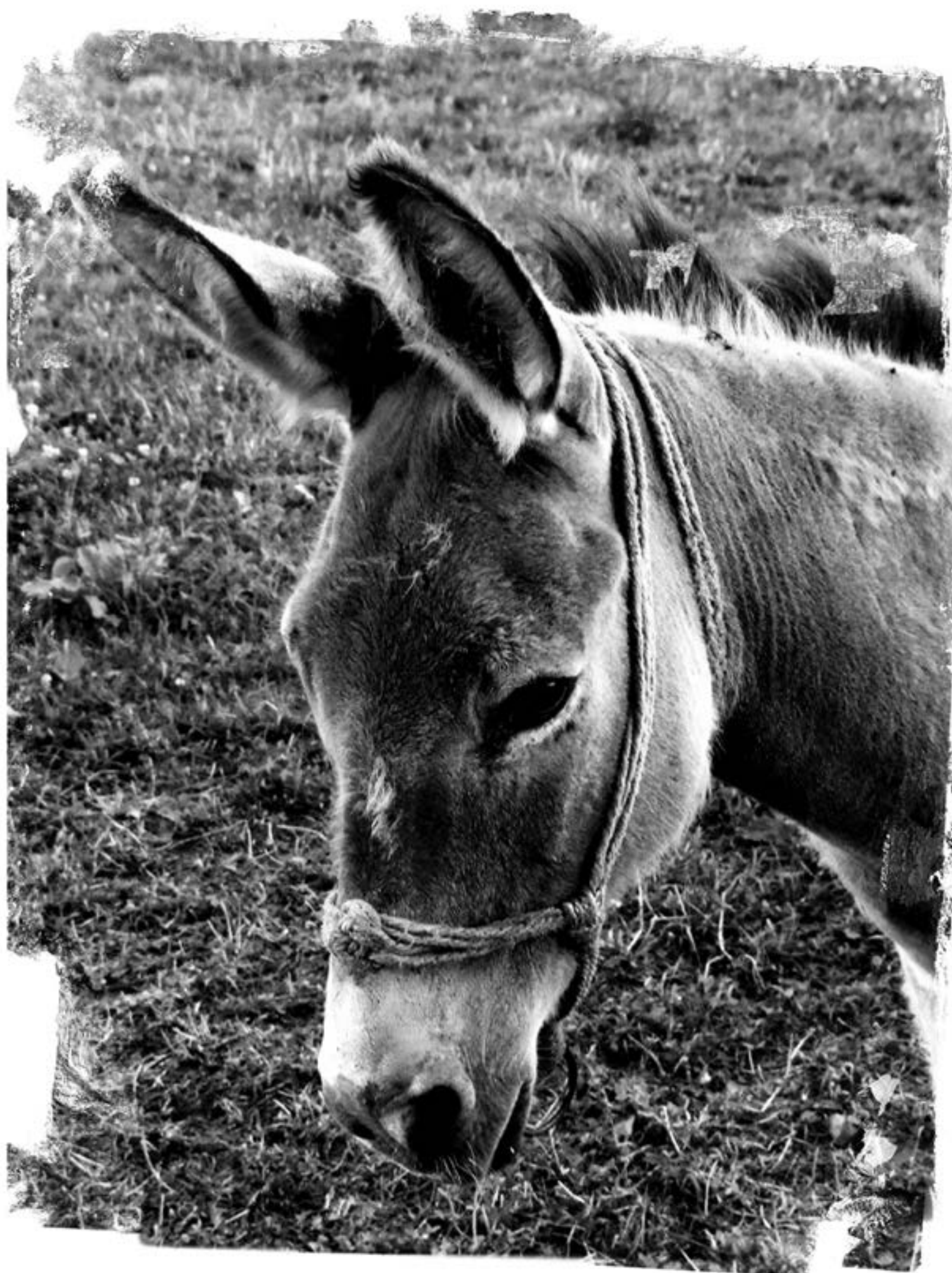


J.D. Flynn, the editor in chief of the Catholic publication The Pillar, has two children with Down syndrome, and he wrote recently about the grace he receives while caring for them. "These people require that I cast out into the deep — that in patience, and presence, and assistance, I go beyond where I wish to go, and beyond even where I can go, on my own," he writes. "Because here's the thing: Out there in the deep, beyond my own self-giving, that's where grace is. That's where I've found something that seems like joy."

-Valerie Pavilonis

OK,
get ready for the big
epiphany of your life,
the breakthrough moment,
is about to happen
—right now





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Saktini!





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